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Travellers' site: 'We will stop paying tax'

Essex
County
Standard

23 July
2004

by ROBERT MEAD

Resident willing to go to jail

RESIDENTS have threatened to withhold their council tax if a travellers' site is given planning permission.

One of them is willing to go to jail, if necessary.

David Windsor, of Daisy Green, said he and his wife would "seriously consider" not paying their council tax if permission was granted for a site in Turkey Cock Lane, Stanway.

He said: "If they push us far enough, and the situation becomes intolerable, I would be prepared to go to jail. It just depends how the situation develops really."

Last week, the County

Standard spoke to a man who called himself an "English true-bred gipsy" who had bought and moved two caravans onto land alongside the A12 at Turkey Cock Lane, inviting two other people to join him.

Since then, the gipsy has lodged a planning application for six caravans on the site, an application which was discussed by Stanway Parish Council's planning committee on Tuesday.

More than 30 residents attended the meeting, including Mr Windsor, who said: "I've spoken to the

man and he's quite pleasant and courteous but this is obviously the thin end of the wedge.

"We've seen the same at Cottingham and there is no reason to think it won't happen here.

"All these plans start with two caravans and end up swamping the village and we just won't stand for that.

"If it was two caravans and just the man, I probably wouldn't object at all but it's probably not going to be like that. Already, it's up to four caravans."

He also fears the council could

use this as an "escape route" to avoid establishing its own travellers' site.

At Tuesday's meeting, Christina Edwards, chairman of Stanway's planning committee, said a complaint of unauthorised encampment had been lodged with Colchester Council.

However, she added the complaint would not be dealt with until the council deals with the issue of planning permission.

Members of Stanway Parish Council will discuss the matter in full at its meeting on August 3.